

Miracles of Jesus 12-05-13a

This is Sunday, the 13th of May, 2012. We continue our study of the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will be looking at the miraculous draft of fishes from Luke chapter 5. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, ensure that we're susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, both in the presentation and in the reception of the material this morning, and that the passage we look at will be meaningful to each one of us.

Shall we pray? Father, we are so grateful for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship, in receiving the benefit of the manna of heaven that is present in Your Word, the truth that sustains us and enables us to grow, gives us guidance and motivation and a clear vision of our place in Your plan and purpose. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ, for His saving work, for His intercessory work, for His encouragement as our example. We pray that as we study His words and works this morning, that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts in a way that will be life-changing, that will give us an ever clearer sense of our calling and our opportunities, so that on the day of His return we will rejoice, we will move with eagerness toward Him, to be with Him and to serve Him and You in the ages that are to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, in a study of miracles, it is helpful from time to time to remember what the purpose of a miracle is.

If I said, OK, close your notebooks, close your Bibles, take out a piece of paper, take out a pen and write down the purpose of biblical miracles, what would you say? First of all, you kind of have to define what a biblical miracle is. Is creation of the universe, is that a miracle? Well, it is, but normally when we talk about miracles, we talk about the sign miracles, miracles that were performed in a way that made an impression on people. God effected a miraculous deliverance for Israel from Egypt, and the plagues were miraculous, the nine plus one, three sets of three, plus the death of the firstborn who were not behind the Passover lamb's blood.

And there is a message, there is a symbolism, and it speaks something, it communicates something in a nonverbal way. So, biblical miracles in general are another channel of communication from God. It can communicate to unbelievers, as it did in Egypt, and to the peoples surrounding the nation of Israel as they came out of slavery and headed toward the promised land once they got in the land.

These miracles spoke. Rahab said, we know about your God and what he has done. So, we have this communication mechanism.

It's a means, it says something. If you have ears to hear, if you're looking, if you're not just, wow, look at that, isn't that spectacular? I've never seen anything like that before. If you're listening, there is a message.

This reminds me, as we speak right now in the air around us, there are all sorts of signals. There are broadcast television channels, there are FM and AM radio stations, there is shortwave broadcast passing through the air here. We don't hear or see any of those at this particular moment.

Why? Well, two things. A, we do not have, currently operating at least, a device to tune those things in. And B, we are not directing our attention to any particular one of those channels.

You're largely listening to the sound of my voice if you're on the Internet or listening on a recording. You're listening to this one thing. There's lots of other things going on, but we are not using a mechanism to access it, nor have we directed our attention to the particular message.

Well, this is the problem with miracles. There were so many people who didn't recognize it as a mechanism for communication, nor did they tune in to the message to figure out what that message was. So it is our goal, as we go through these miracles, to not only note what the Lord Jesus did, but why he did it, how he did it, and with the why and how, we can, in recognizing that there is a communication message there, we can tune in and find out exactly what that message is.

And this, of course, gives us opportunities for meditation and application. So, at the end of this morning, after we have looked at two miracles, what should we be able to do? We come to the miraculous draft of fishes. We come to the healing of the paralyzed man that we'll look at in the second session.

And we should be able to say, this is the meaning of that miracle. This is the truth that it communicated, both in the time that it was performed and today, as we look at it in the inspired record. And from that, I should be able to make application.

It ought to make a difference. Because the Lord Jesus has done this, because I look at it and I see the message that it contains, this message is now in my soul, it's in my heart, it is something I can meditate on, I can apply, I can live in the light of, I can be different, I can be better, I can be more mature, I can bear fruit and be prepared to bear more fruit in the plan and purpose of God. Right.

If we don't achieve that objective, we have failed. So if you turn with me to Luke chapter five, we're going to look at this miracle, which is affectionately known as the first draft of fishes. And one of the things that frustrates foreigners about the English language is the way we spell some words.

Draft is D-R-A-U-G-H-T. It's on the model of the word laugh. So it looks like the first drought of fishes, that would kind of be the opposite meaning there.

This is an abundance. It's a giant catch, an enormous catch of fish. Luke chapter five,

verses one through eleven.

Let's let's read this. Keeping in mind, by the way, that this is the Sea of Galilee, we are still in the area where the previous miracles we have studied were performed. We're up in the north there in Galilee, Capernaum, Peter's house, the synagogue.

Jesus has done some local traveling, has done a few things. You can look in chapter four and see the synagogue miracle where the demons were cast out of the man. The demons saying, what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? We know who you are.

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Jesus says, be quiet, come out of him. Then he goes to Peter's house that same day.

If you looked at that diagram in the biblical archaeology review from November, December 1982, a copy of that, by the way, is in our Grace and Truth Bible Church server area. If you go to a particular book and then go up one level where you can see all of the book studies listed in that folder, below all the folders, you'll see a thing that has a reference to Peter's house in Capernaum. If you look at that, I've got a couple of pictures and things in case you don't have access to the magazine.

You can see that there's a very short distance between the synagogue and Peter's house. They went there and Peter's mother-in-law was healed. We looked at that last time.

Then when the sun was setting, those who had any disease or sickness came to him. He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. This is healing by touch, or at least using the mechanism of touch.

Jesus doesn't always do this. We've seen him heal at a great distance. Normally, they didn't want to touch sick people.

They thought, well, there's sin involved. There is ritual uncleanness. If you touch an unclean thing, you become unclean.

But Jesus, instead of being rendered unclean or defiled by this touch, instead cleanses and heals the person. You could get into a very fine argument from a legal point of view under the Law of Moses if you touch someone and they are instantly healed. Well, did you get defiled? What took place? Did they get healed just a microsecond before you touched them, or did you touch them when they were unclean, which made you unclean, but then they were clean, and so now are you? Jesus never bothered to try to iron that out.

He, of course, was never defiled, was never unclean. The formerly unclean, defiled person is now healed well and clean. He left it up to the scribes and Pharisees to miss

the point and haggle over whether or not that might be the case.

But he rebuked the demons and did not allow them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ, and they were trying to distract. They were trying to interrupt the timetable, to make an issue out of things that God was not yet emphasizing. So Jesus went out and prayed in the middle of the night, and the disciples found him, and the crowd saw him, you'll notice in verse 42, and came to him and tried to keep him from leaving them.

So here is popular appeal. We've got a lot more people. My brother has a sick daughter, and he told me he's on the way.

He sent a runner, but they have to carry her, and he's not here yet, and if you'll just wait, there are more people that you can heal, and oh please Lord, there's a lot more you can do if you'll just stay here, and they appealed to him, and they tried to get him to stay. But as we saw last week, I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent. Jesus had a clear understanding of his purpose, and this is what must define our priorities, and ultimately our actions.

Not just what is the popular consensus, what would everyone around us like for us to do, and can often legitimize and justify and argue for, and say, look at the good you can do if you will stay. What you did yesterday, you should do today. And it's rational, it's reasonable, it makes a kind of sense.

In fact, from a human point of view, it makes absolute sense. We don't know what may be in the other village, but we know we've got sick people here, and there's more on the way. Stay here and heal.

How did Jesus know it was time to leave? Well, the clue is that he had gone out and conferred with his father. He went into a deserted place, got away from people, because you don't decide what you're going to do based on people. We as believers look to our spiritual priorities, our spiritual resources, our spiritual guidance, and we pray, and we ask God, lead and guide.

Help me to understand it. When Jesus meditates on the purpose for which he was sent, this is the key. Clearing the room, clearing his mind, getting off by himself, in prayerful communion with his father, he focuses on his purpose.

And his purpose is the priority. Well, can we make any application of this? We're not the Messiah. We don't have the kind of live line to heaven that Jesus had with his father, but we have the word of God, and we have prayer.

Can we do the same thing? The answer is yes. And we should do it in the same way that the Lord Jesus exemplifies. We need quiet time.

We need alone time. We need communion in the Holy Spirit with God the Father. Now,

we can hold up our end of the conversation very easily.

Oh, Lord, here's my dilemma. Oh, Lord, here's my problem. Here's what people want me to do.

I'm trying to remember what you want me to do, but it's all kind of fuzzy in my mind. We can talk to the Lord ad infinitum. I heard on the radio coming in someone quoting David Jeremiah saying, when you're worried, here's what you do.

Write all your worries down on a piece of paper. Up at the top, write worryless, and then everything that's worrying you, you write it down. And so I told Patty, I said, well, I was expecting that after you do all of this, then maybe over to the right, he would say, now go back and write down any scriptural truth you can think of that applies to that worry.

Is there any promise? Is there any principle? Is there any doctrine? Is there any example? Is there anything you can think of from the Word of God that would apply? But that wasn't how the illustration came back. He said, now cross out worry and write prayer. Prayer list.

You've just made your prayer list. Okay, I don't mean to be or sound critical, but there are some things that are accomplished through prayer. The Lord Jesus is praying here, but what happens after the prayer? Application.

There wasn't a voice from heaven in the prayer. When we pray, it's one way, right? That's us talking to God. Where's God's half of that conversation? It is the Word of God.

It is the scriptural truth. How does Jesus know what his purpose is? The Old Testament is replete with what the servant of God is going to come and do. To preach good tidings of deliverance to the poor.

That is the first thing in the list. Remember our Isaiah study. Behold, the Spirit of God is upon me to preach good tidings of deliverance to the poor.

To preach. It also says to open blind eyes and so on, but this is really in a spiritual sense. And Jesus went beyond the literal and recognized that the blind eyes that needed opening are spiritually blind.

The hearts that need softening are spiritually hard hearts. It's not a case of too much cholesterol and arteriosclerosis. This is a case of need for finding one's place in the plan and purpose of God.

It is time for the kingdom promises to be fulfilled to Israel. And people aren't ready. Jesus said, if I'm casting out demons by the finger of God.

Daktalos. In Greek. We'll see this in a future study in the miracles.

But Jesus said, if I'm casting out demons with the finger of God. The kingdom of God has thonoed you. P-H-T-H-A-N-O.

It has overtaken you. It has gotten ahead of you. The same word that he used in Thessalonians we saw the other night.

Don't get upset about those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Because we who are alive and remain will not precede. We will not preempt.

We will not get ahead of or overtake those who have fallen asleep. They will rise first. They will meet the Lord in the air.

We will rise and join them. So don't worry about those that have fallen asleep. Because we will not overtake them.

We will not get ahead of them. They're not going to be left behind. Same word.

If I cast out demons by the power of God. The kingdom of God has beaten you to the punch. It's gotten there.

You've missed it. You got left behind. And you need to wake up.

This is Jesus' purpose. So this is the purpose of the miracles. Not to ameliorate physical suffering.

Although that is a wonderful side effect. And there are people who are so grateful to have their leprosy or their blindness or their lameness or their deafness or their demon possession or their fits or whatever else they had cleansed and healed. That's great.

But it's not Jesus' purpose. When He said, The poor you have with you always. You can include the sick, the afflicted, those who are dying.

This is not the purpose. These are an avenue through which deeper, more fundamental truths are communicated. Jesus could have stayed in this town and healed for days and days and days.

He could have just set up the Jesus Healing Clinic and just waited and people would stream in from all over the nation. Why go to them? They'll come to me. Word of mouth will spread.

I can just heal, heal, heal. Why didn't He do that? Well, similar to the man at the Pool of Bethesda and many other things that we will see, this is a subordinate function to His purpose. For this purpose, I came.

Well, this is the context now. This is the context for our miracle. Look at Chapter 5. So it was.

He was preaching throughout the synagogues in Galilee. Why did He go to the synagogues? Where do interested people go? Where are the people who are seeking answers from God? They go to synagogue. There's where the scriptures are.

There's where God is spoken of. So Jesus goes to the synagogues. That's the most frequented place by people who are asking and seeking and knocking.

So He goes to the synagogues and preaches. So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the Word of God, that He stood by the lake of Gennesaret. You notice the last part of that, Gennesaret.

And Naseret, Nazareth. And there's a reason why it's not called the Sea of Galilee. It is called Gennesaret here.

Because it is a reminder of Jesus' prophetic title. He is the root shoot from the stump of Jesse. He is the Naser, the branch.

And He is called Jesus the Nazarene. And the reason is it harks back to His identity as the Messiah. This goes back to the kingdom.

This goes back to the promises of God. And that's why even here we are reminded that this is the Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee. And He saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

So He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He stopped speaking, He said to Simon, Then launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

But Simon answered and said to Him, Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, at Your word, I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken. And so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid.

From now on you will catch men. So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed him. Well, this is interesting at a number of levels.

He is pressed by the crowd. There are so many people standing around that he cannot speak effectively. So he sees these two boats, and he has Simon go out a ways.

There's a natural amphitheater effect. You know what a lakeshore looks like as it comes down to the water line. His voice is going to reflect off the water.

There's a huge crowd up there. And as they sit on the bank, it's just like being at a stadium. It's just like being at a theater.

Everyone can see. Everyone can hear. It's ideal.

His voice is reflected and amplified in that sense. And it's a great teaching venue. What had Jesus said up in the end of chapter 4? I must preach the kingdom of God.

So what is the content of this preaching? It's the kingdom of God. That's what he is preaching. This is referred to in other gospels.

And one of the things we notice is the interesting way that stories are edited. It doesn't make them untrue, but they are presented in a certain light and in a certain way. Keep your finger here and turn to Matthew chapter 4. There are some Bibles that don't even make a cross-reference to this, because it seems so different.

Matthew chapter 4 verse 18. And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. Then he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

They immediately left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

This is the same day. It is the same event. But we have different parts of it told.

The common elements are, it is at the shore. The men are there with their boats and their nets. There is fishing going on, and Jesus says, You will be fishers of men, or from now on you will catch men.

But you can see that you would have a completely different mental movie of what happened if you just look at Matthew or if you just look at Luke. And you say, Well, it just looks to me like there are too many disparate elements here. Why doesn't Matthew mention the miraculous catch of fish? And why doesn't Luke mention that Peter and Andrew were casting their nets? It says they were mending their nets.

People want to get all wrapped around the details here. This is a day. This is a long day.

Jesus is pressed by the multitude. He wants to speak to them. There are fishermen who are cleaning their nets.

There are boats that are unmanned at the moment, at anchor there at the shore. They're

drawn up and anchored. And the men are in the vicinity, but they're messing with their nets.

They're doing one thing and another. Jesus finds Simon, whom he knows. They've all come up together from the Jordan.

They've been to Cana together. They've been in the synagogue together. They've been to Peter's mother-in-law, to Peter's house.

He knows them. And he says, Simon, would you come here for a minute? And he has him pull the boat out a little ways. Well, that is not inconsistent with what Matthew says.

Jesus saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea. Well, when Jesus first came down to the shore, maybe they were casting the net. But it was the close of a long night, and they still weren't catching anything.

And while Jesus is down there, they give up. They drag their net up to the shore, and they start cleaning it, cleaning the mud out of it, because they're not catching any fish. And Jesus says, Peter.

And he says, I'll let Andrew finish cleaning the net. I'll take you out a few feet so that you can speak to these people. It's not inconsistent.

It's a long day. We want everything to be exact and precise. We want it all to match in detail.

We don't want to allow for different observers being impressed with different parts of the day at different times. And when these stories are compressed, there's people that pull these up and say, oh, the Bible is a hopeless mess of contradictions. No, it isn't.

What you have to do is allow for the fact that this is real life, and different observers are going to see different things, remember different things from different parts of the day, all of which are absolutely true, all of which absolutely happened. And we have the benefit of this stereoscopic view. If your left eye told you exactly the same thing that your right eye told you, you would have no depth perception at all.

You could not tell distances. It is because of the differences in our eyes that gives us perspective. It gives us depth of focus and depth of field.

So allow for the flexibility for the Bible to tell these stories in its own way in the various gospels. There are things to be learned. Secondly, one of the things that you see here is that he asked him to put out a little from the land, and he sat down and taught the multitudes.

When he had stopped speaking, he said to Simon, launch out into the deep. How long a sermon was this? He evidently got there in the early morning because the fishermen,

Simon and Andrew, were still vainly casting a net to no effect. After the crowd of people had assembled, Jesus had them push him out in the boat, probably taught perhaps for a couple of hours.

It is now completely opposite the best time to fish. Fishing at night, apparently on a well-lit full moon type of night, you have fish that are coming up trying to catch insects and whatnot. It's a good time to catch them by the kind of fishing that they do.

They fished all night and didn't catch anything. They say, well, it's even less likely now that the sun is up and the fish have been driven down to cooler water or whatever. They're just not available.

After Jesus' teaching, it's even less likely that they would catch anything. This is why Simon answers and says, Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, at your word, I will let down the net.

Why would Peter call him Master? Why would he obey? Especially when you get to Matthew and it sounds like, well, this is the first meeting. Jesus is just walking along and meets a couple of fishermen. Follow me.

And they drop their nets and robotically follow him on down. Not at all. They know him well.

And this is why Peter is willing to do what Jesus says. You can't help but wonder if he's thinking back to Cana, where Mary says, do whatever he tells you. And so the servants fill these pots with water, thinking, well, how is this going to help the wine shortage? And Peter has figured out that obedience is a good response to the word of God.

And when Jesus says, row out a ways and let down your net, Peter says, as a professional fisherman, I just want you to know that this is totally futile. But if you say so, I will do it. And you think that Peter is kind of gearing himself up for a, I told you so.

Look at this limp, empty net. How long have I been a fisherman? I know you come from, I don't know, where are you? Did you grow up in Bethlehem or Nazareth or someplace? And maybe you don't know about fish. And I just want you to know that my professional opinion was a big waste of time.

And I could be in there wrapping up my nets and trying to salvage some part of it. But if you say so, I'll let down my net. So he goes.

When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and the net was breaking. Now, you think about the kind of nets they had. And these are professional fishermen.

And if their nets are breaking, you know how many fish that is? This is full to capacity and beyond. And they can't even haul them in because the weight is so much. And

where is the net going to break, by the way? It's not breaking in the huge bulbs where the fish are.

It's breaking where they are pulling on the net. You've got to grab the net somewhere and try to pull it in. And when they grab, they're breaking the top of the net.

And so they've got to try. And they can't get a bunch. They can't get a handful because it's so full, they can't gather it.

They can't bunch it. If you've ever raked leaves and put them in the little plastic, I mean, the paper recycling sacks, and then you try to close the top so you can set them out to be picked up and you want too many leaves. I can't close the top.

Well, this is a problem with the net. They can't close the net. When they try to pull it in, it's breaking.

So they signal to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. More hands at more contact points around the net. Now, with enough of those, it just manages to hold.

And so with four of them at least, they managed to pull this enormous thing into the boat. Well, they still underestimated it because when they pull it in, now the water is right up to the top of the gunnels and they're about to sink the boat with these fish. And this is just astonishing.

They have never seen anything like this. They came and filled both of the boats. They dumped part of the net into the boat and they say, look, we're going to sink.

Are we putting more of these in? There's still more fish in the net. So look, transfer it over to your side. We're on starboard.

You're on port. You take this and you pull it in. And they filled both of the boats so that they, the two boats, began to sink.

They're just praying for calm water because if any kind of a sea comes up, they're going to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees. Why did he fall down at Jesus' knees instead of his feet? Because Jesus is up to his knees in fish.

That's why. Peter fell at his knees because the boat is full of fish. There's no place to fall but at Jesus' knees.

And that tells you something about the draft of the boat. And so Peter falls and there are no feet to fall on. Can't see him.

So he's on top of the fish saying, Lord, depart from me. I am a sinful man. Well, this is a very detailed miracle.

And this is probably where I'm going to catch up and get back on the, you know, two miracles at an even number because we're going to need to pause here and take our break. But if this was the only thing we heard for the day, what would the application be? Well, first of all, what came first? Preaching of the word. Peter, Andrew, James and John have heard the entire Bible message for that morning, right? Even while they were working, they were listening.

While they were cleaning their nets, Peter rose the Lord Jesus out. He said, well, you know, we've got a lot of cleanup. We got to do maintenance.

When Jesus asks to be rode out, Peter does it. When Jesus says, take your boat out deeper and throw out the net, even though obedience doesn't make sense from a human point of view. Peter does it.

So look at the sequence. There is the preaching and teaching of the word. There is the recognition of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there is obedience. Following those three things, there is abundant blessing. Look at the sequence.

Hearing the word of God. Believing the word of God as it is reflected in the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Followed by obedience.

You hear, express faith and obey. That's the pattern. The most important thing, thick and heavy in this story, is hearing the word, believing the word, and obeying the word.

And when those three things are fulfilled, the provision and the blessing is literally not just my cup runneth over, my boat runneth over. So this is a great example for us. We, too, are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We, too, hear the preaching of the word of God. We, too, have the opportunity for faith. We, too, have the expectation and the challenge and the call to obedience.

And many times it doesn't seem to make sense from a human point of view. This will be the end of my academic career. This will be the end of my professional career.

This is going to be the end of my relationship with this person if I stick to my guns and do what I know the word of God tells me to do. Circumstantially, my life is going to be over. This doesn't comport with human wisdom in any way, shape, or form.

But it's the right thing to do. I've prayed about it. I've meditated on it.

I've applied the word of God. I have perhaps even consulted with a few of my close, believing, faithful Christian friends and family. And this is just the right thing.

And it looks like I'm stepping off into oblivion, but I'm going to follow the word of the

Lord. That is the very moment where abundant, prolific, superabounding blessing, shaken together, pressed down, comes. So we're only halfway through this miracle.

We'll take our break. And when we come back, we'll conclude. There are some things here that you might think we've canvassed the whole thing, but we haven't quite gotten it all yet.

So I'll be back in a few minutes to continue.